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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/166 on the role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in eliminating violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 50/166 on the role of the United Nations Development for Women in eliminating violence against women, the General Assembly requested the Fund to include in its regular reports information regarding its activities to eliminate violence against women and girls and to provide such information to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. It also requested the Fund to include in its regular reports information, *inter alia*, on the establishment of a trust fund in support of national, regional and international actions to eliminate violence against women and to provide such information to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights.

2. The report of the Fund, as transmitted by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, is annexed to the present note.

* E/CN.6/1998/1.

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Annex

The role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in eliminating violence against women

Introduction

1. In its resolution 50/166 entitled "The role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in eliminating violence against women", the General Assembly requested UNIFEM to strengthen its activities towards eliminating violence against women at the community, national, regional and international levels and to provide information on the issue to the Commission on the Status of Women.

I. Role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in the elimination of violence against women

2. The role of UNIFEM in the elimination of violence against women was described in a report submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-second session (A/52/300) and to the Commission at its forty-first session (E/CN.6/1997/8).

3. In 1997, UNIFEM continued to support initiatives for strengthening the networking, capacity building, leadership enhancement, and advocacy of women at the national, regional, and global levels. These efforts remain geared towards enhancing the recognition by the international community that violence against women is a fundamental issue of human rights. In that regard, 1998 offers special opportunities for UNIFEM to focus attention on the issue of violence against women as a fundamental issue of women's human rights, particularly in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the five-year review of the World Conference on Human Rights, and the review by the Commission of the Beijing Platform for Action chapters on violence, human rights, armed conflict and the girl child.

4. UNIFEM has worked to implement activities towards the elimination of violence against women through gender training for legal administration, governmental and non-governmental personnel; assistance to women organizations to analyse and change legislation; production and dissemination of information on violence against women directed at change of social and policy attitudes towards this problem; and other innovative strategies being piloted by NGOs and governments.

5. In 1997, the Fund's agenda in the area of violence against women has for the first time been implemented to a large extent through the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, established at UNIFEM under the provisions of Assembly resolution 50/166. In addition to the activities of the Trust Fund, UNIFEM Regional Programme Advisors have worked to facilitate initiatives to eliminate violence against women in their respective regions.

6. Notable among these regional efforts are the production of a book on experiences and lessons learned from anti-violence initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean; the commissioning of a study on the pattern and incidence of violence against women in educational institutions in English-speaking West Africa; support of awareness-raising campaigns focused on female genital mutilation in francophone West Africa; and the publication of a Gender Resource Directory in South Asia for Women Victims of Domestic Violence, Desertion, and Rape. In addition, the Fund's Latin America and Caribbean regional offices, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, have mounted a region-wide media awareness campaign aimed at raising public awareness and sensitising public and policy makers on issues of violence against women.

II. Steps taken to implement the Trust Fund

7. The previous report to the Commission on the Status of Women outlined the initial steps undertaken by UNIFEM to implement the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence. During 1997, Trust Fund activities gained momentum, reflecting the Fund's commitment towards shaping this new initiative as a mechanism that translates recommendations adopted in Beijing into concrete action.

8. During 1997, two sessions of the Project Approval Committee for the Trust Fund were held in June and November. In accordance with resolution 50/166, the Committee is chaired by UNIFEM and includes representatives of the Division for the Advancement of

Women, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Two representatives from NGO networks who work in the area of violence against women are also invited to participate in the Project Approval Committee.

9. Projects were selected for funding approval based on their quality, the degree to which their stated objectives and proposed activities coincided with the Terms of Reference for the Trust Fund, as well as the Fund's goal to maintain a fair distribution of funding among all participating regions.

10. The Programme Approval Committee allocated all funds contributed to the Trust Fund in 1997 (a total of US$ 1.2 million) to 36 projects selected from almost 200 proposals submitted for consideration. An additional 19 projects, also approved for funding, are awaiting additional contributions to the Trust Fund. Between January and December 1997, the number of incoming proposals increased exponentially as word of the Trust Fund spread, and UNIFEM expects the number of submissions to continue to rise in 1998.

11. Projects were funded in the following countries: Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, India, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine and Venezuela. Two regional projects from networks of NGOs working in the area of violence against women and women's health were funded in Latin America, in addition to a global project representing a partnership between an international NGO and the Division for the Advancement of Women. Over 20 of the approved projects have begun their implementation phase, while the rest are slated to begin by the end of January 1998.

12. The initiatives funded by the Trust Fund closely reflect the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action and represent a wide range of strategies undertaken by national and regional groups to eliminate gender-based violence: educational campaigns, capacity building of women's organizations, changing relevant laws, making women aware of their rights, public education on laws and rights of women pertaining to violence in rural and urban communities, strengthening women's advocacy skills in work on gender-based violence, violence against women migrant workers, and various training programmes targeting police, judges, teachers, health workers, public administrators etc.

13. Grant recipients have all been informed that an impact assessment of their initiative will be required at the end of their project. This is to ensure the documentation of the projects supported by the Trust Fund and to facilitate a global impact assessment of this initiative at a later stage. A thorough impact assessment will help in shaping the focus and criteria of the Trust Fund itself and will provide critical information for the General Assembly and other bodies in the United Nations system on the best practices and lessons learned from the innovative and catalytic initiatives carried out under the auspices of the Trust Fund.

14. UNIFEM accepts project proposals for consideration throughout the year and convenes the Programme Approval Committee twice yearly in order to select projects for funding approval. Additional and ongoing advertising of the existence of the Trust Fund and its criteria is currently being pursued in order to encourage an even broader range of proposals. To that end, UNIFEM has produced a Trust Fund informational brochure that is being disseminated to a wide variety of networks and organizations and will additionally be posted on the Fund's web site.

15. The first year of operations of the Trust Fund has served to bring to light activities in various regions of the world and a growing recognition by local groups and governments of the need to intervene in order to address violence against women in all its forms. It is the hope of UNIFEM that the enthusiasm set forth by launching this action-oriented initiative will be sustained through 1998 and even further expanded in the future, through a strengthened commitment of United Nations agencies and additional contributions from member States.

16. In its short period of existence, the Trust Fund has already demonstrated its potential to contribute to the work of the United Nations in the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. To that end, UNIFEM will continue to ensure that lessons learned from its operational activities form part of the system-wide efforts of the United Nations to eliminate violence against women.